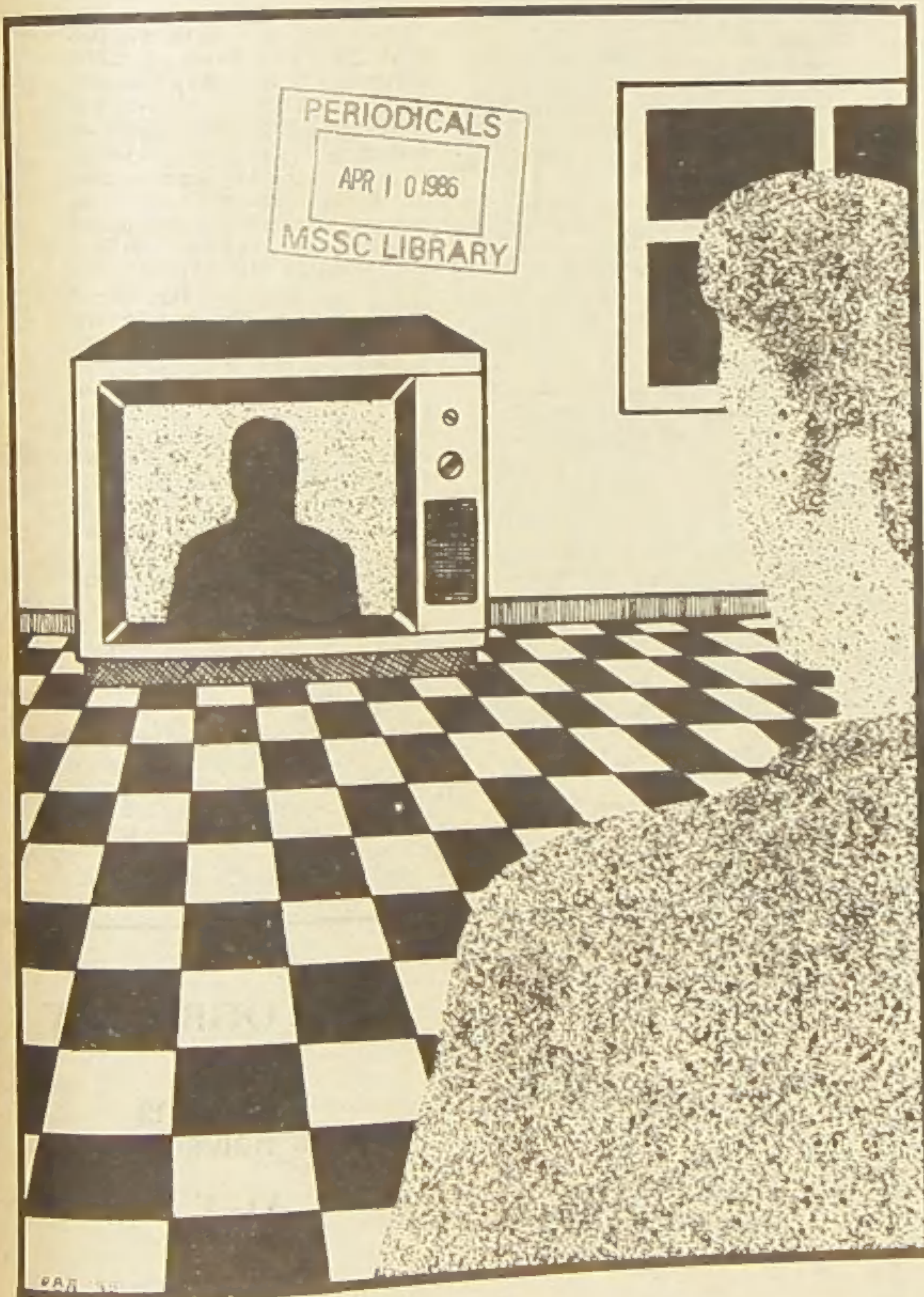


AVALON



MISSOURI SOUTHERN'S LITERARY MAGAZINE

Missouri Southern State College
Joplin, MO 64801-1595



A Performance of Shadows

John Mark Lane

Summit Meetings

Jeanette Bradfield

Who's The Doctor?

and

The Lord is My Shepherd

Tom Bartkowiak

AVALON

Missouri Southern's Literary Magazine



AVALON is published monthly by Missouri Southern's Communications Department.

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Editor's Notes

By Simon P. McCaffery

Famous last words. . .

Well, folks, this is it. This edition of *Avalon* will be my last as editor. It has been fun, and very educating, but it is time to let it go and let someone else take over the reins.

Thankfully, we have found someone to continue editing and producing *Avalon*. Beginning in the fall, Bob Vice, also an editor with *The Chart*, will take the magazine over. I am very pleased that Bob has agreed to take over *Avalon*. I was beginning to give up the idea that the magazine would survive my departure from Missouri Southern. That would have been unfortunate, both for students and faculty. And it will be interesting to come back next year and see how it is progressing in new hands.

Since this is a farewell address, I would also like to thank some people who made the magazine possible. Working on *Avalon* has been a good experience, as well as being an enjoyable challenge. And occasionally, a migraine. First off, my sincere thanks to Richard Massa, who as I write is in the hospital eating jello and watching lost episodes of his favorite, *Green Acres*. "Daddy" Massa was willing to listen to my ideas, and provide the funding from the department. I also owe thanks to Chad Stebbins, who was *Avalon*'s advisor, and gave the project the go-ahead. To these two men and the rest of the students and faculty of Southern: "Thank You!"

Now that the school year is drawing to a close, not on little cat's paws, but on massive, lumbering wrestler's, my

time is spent trying to secure a job. Please, God, just a job. Gimme a job. Baby needs a new pair of shoes, and so do I, as a matter of fact.

When you try to enter the JOB MARKET, you have to SELL YOURSELF, or you end up swamping out Greyhounds. I can see some dusty, time-creased salesman going door-to-door, rapping his knuckles on every door, dragging his dirty, taped suitcase. The door opens cautiously, and he immediately slips his foot in. The suitcase lid flips up, and out springs
SIMON P. MCCAFFERY

And if you buy now, you'll receive, at NO extra charge, his attractive wife and kid, about 1000 books, a stereo, and two used cars. What-a-deal.

Then again, what about Libya? How about a "Break for the Beach?" Listening to such events and reading about them make me want to blow lunch. What in God's name are we doing, and should what's-his-name, leader of Terrorism Inc., really allowed to drink air? Wouldn't life be easier if this was a cheap Chuck Norris movie where the bad guys get their's? But it's a complex situation, and there are no Good Guys in white and Bad Guys in black, only Ron and the Kadaf. And somewhere in the mist, the Bear.

But somewhere, it's okay. The problems of today become the yellowed newspapers of tomorrow, resting on the bottom of a happy bird's cage.

So have a good final's week, a fine summer, and check in with the magazine next year.

Again, thank you all and good night.

Contributors:

FICTION

John Mark Lane
Tom Bartkowiak
Jeanette Bradfield

POETRY

Bertha Wootten-Case
Curtis Steere
Jon Jonz
Susan Stone
Melody Cundiff

PHOTOGRAPHY

Rick Evans
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ART

Rick Evans—Cover
John Phillips

A PERFORMANCE OF SHADOWS

By John Mark Lane



John Phillips

He shook his head, trying to straighten out the haze in his mind. He knew that it was an impossible feat—Jack Daniels and some Black Beauties had him on a buzz that was quickly turning into a roller coaster ride. He could hear the crowd in the large arena screaming for the opening group to play one more song. They quieted down a little bit when the roadies rushed on the stage and began to work their particular brand of magic, turning a plain stage into a hell-washed landscape.

A head popped through the door, "Just a few minutes more Max. Need a hand or anything?"

"No. I'm all set. Sounds like a hell of a crowd!"

"Yeah, they're out for blood tonight. They been waitin' a long time for your homecoming."

Max struggled to get the last of his leather gear in place, gave the mirror one last look and left the small dressing room. Standing just off stage Max waited impatiently for the stage to get ready. This was the moment every performer hated the most, the short wait just before going on stage. Wave after wave of dizzy warmth swept through his body as the alcohol rode his amphetamine washed brain. He was ready. A tap on his shoulder indicated they were ready to go on.

Michael, guitar in hand, jogged past him and headed for the right side of the stage. Max headed for center stage and found the microphone stand in the dark. The fog machine began spewing out vanilla smoke, covering the stage in a silent cloud. Max couldn't hear the crowd inasmuch as he could feel their presence and head the low roar of voices.

The last of the roadies on the stage checked over his position and his microphone, gave him a pat on the shoulder and said "Giv'em hell Max."



Max looked back at Jamie seated behind the array of octagonal electronic drums. Jamie was busy working with the drums, trying to get everything just right. Max grinned at his friend's persistence. Jamie had also worked for a few hours that afternoon and still wasn't satisfied.

Max waited until he got the signal. He steeled himself for the blinding light that he'd never gotten used to. The hairs rose on the nape of his neck. Now they were waiting for him to start the show.

"One. Two. Three. Four!" he screamed into the mike. The blast from the bass hit him right in the back. "Let's GO!" The guitar knifed through the sound and the spotlights were all on him. They were thousands of times brighter than they should have been. He stumbled backwards and fell. He could feel the heat like an open oven. He couldn't get away. The music was deafening. It wasn't music, but a wall of sound so loud as to be painful.

Then there was no sound at all. The light changed to a silvery shadow of its former brilliance. He stood up. Mike smiled as if nothing had happened. "Let's do it," he said. "Yeah," Max answered. "All the way." They began to play. They played like no band before them, and the audience worshipped them like gods.

The portable cardiostimulator was quickly positioned by the pale young man on the bed. "Clear!" The whine of the heart monitor was interrupted as the machine discharged into the pale young singer's chest, and quickly resumed.

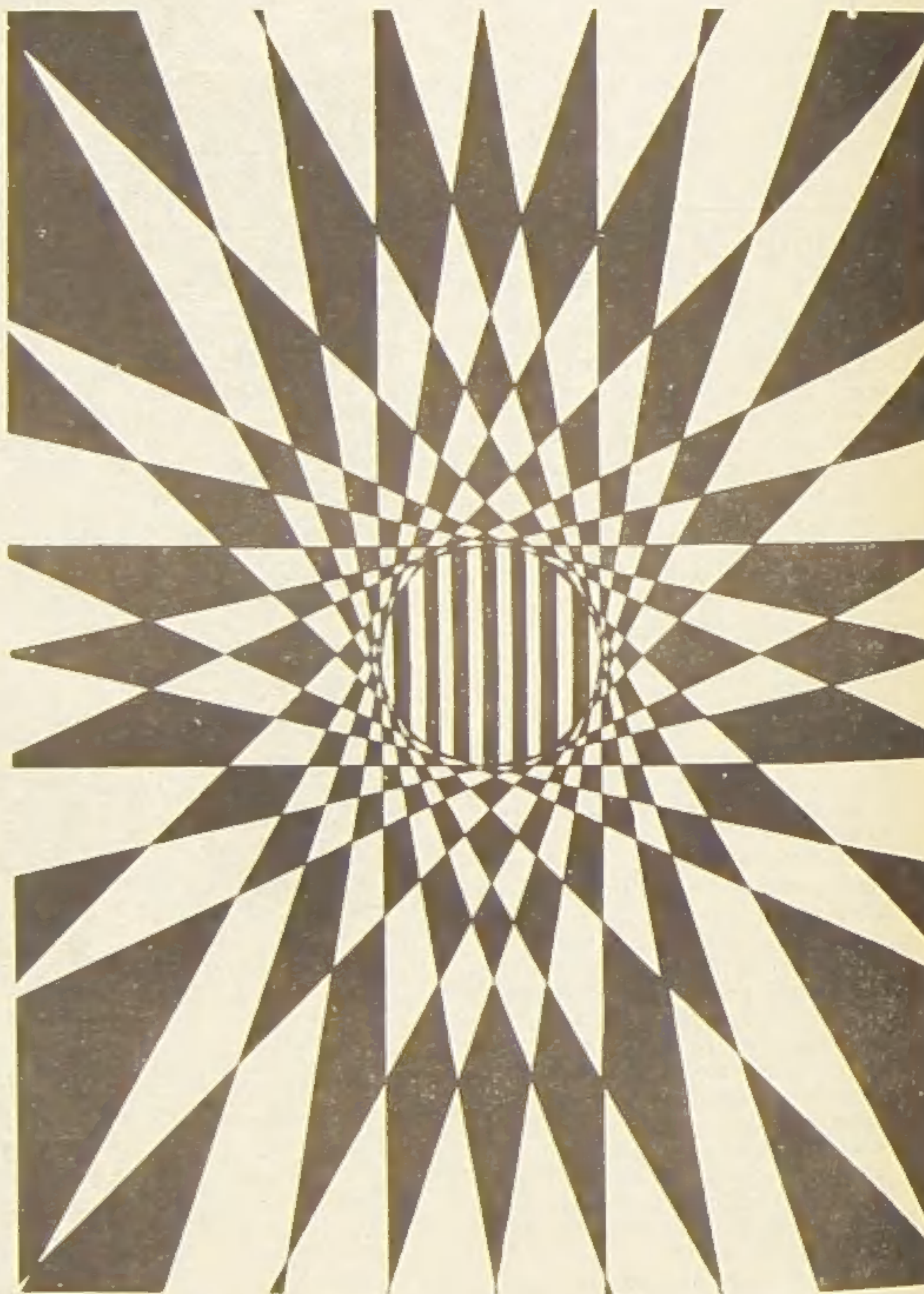
"No response," the nurse said.

"Clear!" Again the whine stopped as the young man's back arched briefly from the kinetic discharge.

"Nothing. My youngest daughter will hate me for this. She idolizes him. He won't be singing anymore. Patient Max Williams dead of drug overdose. Time 9:14 P.M." The doctor nodded to the nurse and turned to leave as the sheet was pulled over the face of the dead singer. "They never learn. They never learn."

Max was amazed that he didn't seem tired after the concert. He knew there would be many more concerts like tonight's, maybe better. He gave Mike a hug and they headed for backstage.

they were thousands of times brighter than they should have been
they were thousands of times brighter than they should have been
they were thousands of times brighter than they should have been



then there was no sound at all then there was no sound at all
then there was no sound at all then there was no sound at all
then there was no sound at all then there was no sound at all



Who's The Doctor?

John Phillips

By Tom Bartkowiak

can't think of anyone that actually likes to go see doctors. I absolutely hate to do it. The reason is that everyone in the doctor's office is supposed to be trained professionals, but they are actually unorthodox goofballs. This is what happened to me the last time I saw a doctor. I'm sure it has happened to you too.

The first person I encountered was the "assistant nurse." She looked about 20 years old with long, stringy hair and she was twirling her gum around her finger. She looked up at me and asked, "What's yer name?"

"Tom Bartkowiak."

"Sit over there and I'll holler yer name when the doctor is ready."

As I walked over towards the only vacant seat in the room, the people stared at me. They were probably wondering what awful disease I had that would compel me to see a doctor. When I sat down, the lady next to me kept staring at me. I decided to have some fun. So I turned to her with a smile and said, "I'm here because I have herpes simplex ten. What are you in for?"

I must have offended her because she got up and stormed out the door.

I then looked to my right where some magazines were stacked up. I picked up the top one to find that it was the September 1952 issue of *Medical Journal*. The cover story was "Doctors in Korea Find Placebos Effective."

I began to thumb through the magazine and got caught up in an article about lab mice. My appointment was at two o'clock. The mice made the time go by faster because it wasn't until 2:43 when the assistant nurse called my name. "The doctor will see ya now." She led me to a room not much bigger than a closet and said, "Take your shirt off. The doctor will be here soon."

"Wait a minute. I'm here for a planter's wart on my foot. Why do I need to take my shirt off?"

"Look, will ya just do it? I don't know why. If ya wanna know why, ask the doctor."

I began to take off my shirt when I noticed a chilly draft in the room. I didn't want to catch cold so I left my shirt on.

After almost 30 minutes, a man with frizzy red hair and a receding hairline



entered. He had a huge nose and thick glasses. He was coughing as he came in. I imagine he caught a cold being in these cold rooms all day. His voice cracked and he had a slight lisp.

"Hi Mark."

"My name is Tom," I replied with a smile.

"Are you sure?"

"No doc! Let me look at my driver's license! Yes I'm sure!"

"Oh. What seems to be the problem?"

"A planter's wart on my foot."

"What do you think we should do about it?"

"That's why I came to see you, doc. If I knew what to do I would've saved myself a lot of time and a lot of money!"

"You're right! I guess I am the doctor."

At least somebody thinks so!

"Take off your shoe so I can see it."

The doctor looked at my bare foot and exclaimed, "My goodness! I've never seen one that big!"

"The wart is that big?!"

"No! Your big toe. The wart is nothing. I'll have that off in no time."

The doctor pulled out a razor-sharp knife that was about two feet long.

"What are you doing with that?"

"I'm going to cut your wart off."

"No you're not!"

"Yes, I am!"

I put my shoe on and shouted, "No you're not!" I ran out of the office and into my car. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. My hands were shaking and I was sweating profusely.

This doctor scared me so much that I made a pact with myself to never see a doctor again!





Donald P. Roagen, president and movie star, sat wisely contemplating the stars. Make-up concealed the wrinkles and a girdle tightened the end-of-season sag.

Nickol Gabachav also sat wisely contemplating the stars. Nothing as decadent as make-up concealed his features, except for the tiny bit of cover-stick under the eyes. But no matter. The two great leaders were contemplating the stars and tomorrow's upcoming summit meeting. Both were prepared to battle to the death for his country's interests (not the people, the interests).

The next day, Gabachav opened by pointing out that of course the U.S. was hopelessly inferior as it could only destroy the world four times over while the U.S.S.R. could destroy it ten times over. He smiled, "Of course, we would never do such a thing." Cheers from the third world and the communist satellites.

Roagen said, "The U.S. wants peace but we will not give up Star Wars or our expanding military development because we can only destroy the world four times to your ten. You must reduce your arsenal."

Gabachav countered that the U.S.S.R. certainly could not destroy the world ten times over. Such a statement was a vicious lie repeated by war-mongering Americans to discredit the poor, peace-loving Soviet Union.

Roagen replied the United States had proof of the Soviet arsenal. Proof, by God!

Gabachav retorted fiercely, "And what about those spies you've been mistreating?"

Roagen was slightly confused. However, he soon recovered and that

winning, boyish smile of his flashed out. He stated confidently that he is sure they can reach an agreement. Gabachav agreed. Each reported favorable progress to the press.

Day 2

The next day, the two leaders began to really hammer out the terms of the agreement.

Gabachav said generously, "You may continue to think about Star Wars, because as we all know it will be 2050 before you have any success AND by that time we will have missiles to go through it. But, since I'm letting you have Star Wars, you must let me have my 250 nuclear submarines."

Roagen hesitated, "Gee, you drive a hard bargain ... I suppose so. But we both have to agree to limit our military budgets, too, not just the amount of the stuff we already have."

Gabachav nodded, "That seems reasonable. We will cut our military budget by 20 per cent. We will only spend 80 per cent of what we take in on our military."

Roagen beamed, "That's the spirit! Only you must do me a favor-if the budget seems large this year, please overlook it this once. You see, we're redecorating the Pentagon and prices have been so high lately ... you know

what I mean?"

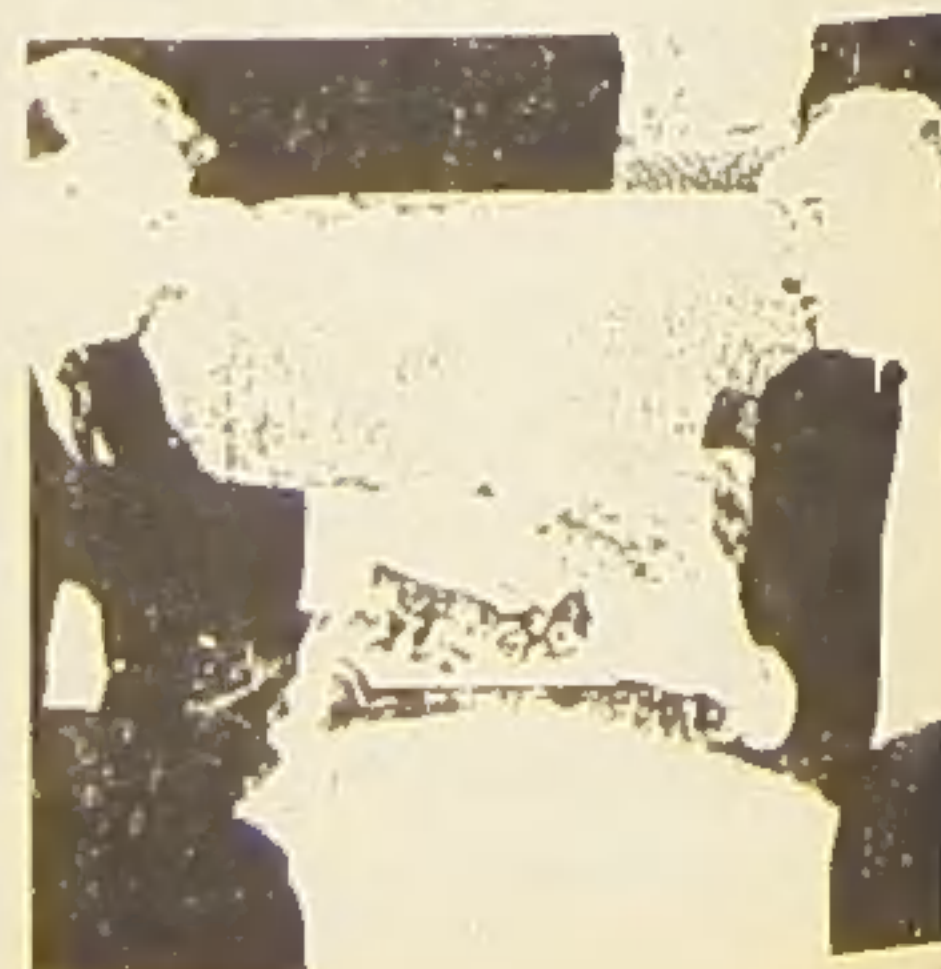
"I understand perfectly, comrade."

Day 3

After three tense days, the leaders were ready to sign the historic document.

As Roagen signed, he remarked to Gabachav, "Well, I knew we could get along and get this done if we put our minds to it. Just think, this paper will usher in a new era of peace!"

Gabachav signed also, unobtrusively crossing his fingers behind his back. "I agree with you perfectly, comrade President."



Summit



Meetings



By Jeanette Bradfield

Mexico During Spring Break, 1980

*The Grandmother and the Young Girl in the Chapel,
and the Old Man in the Vestible.*



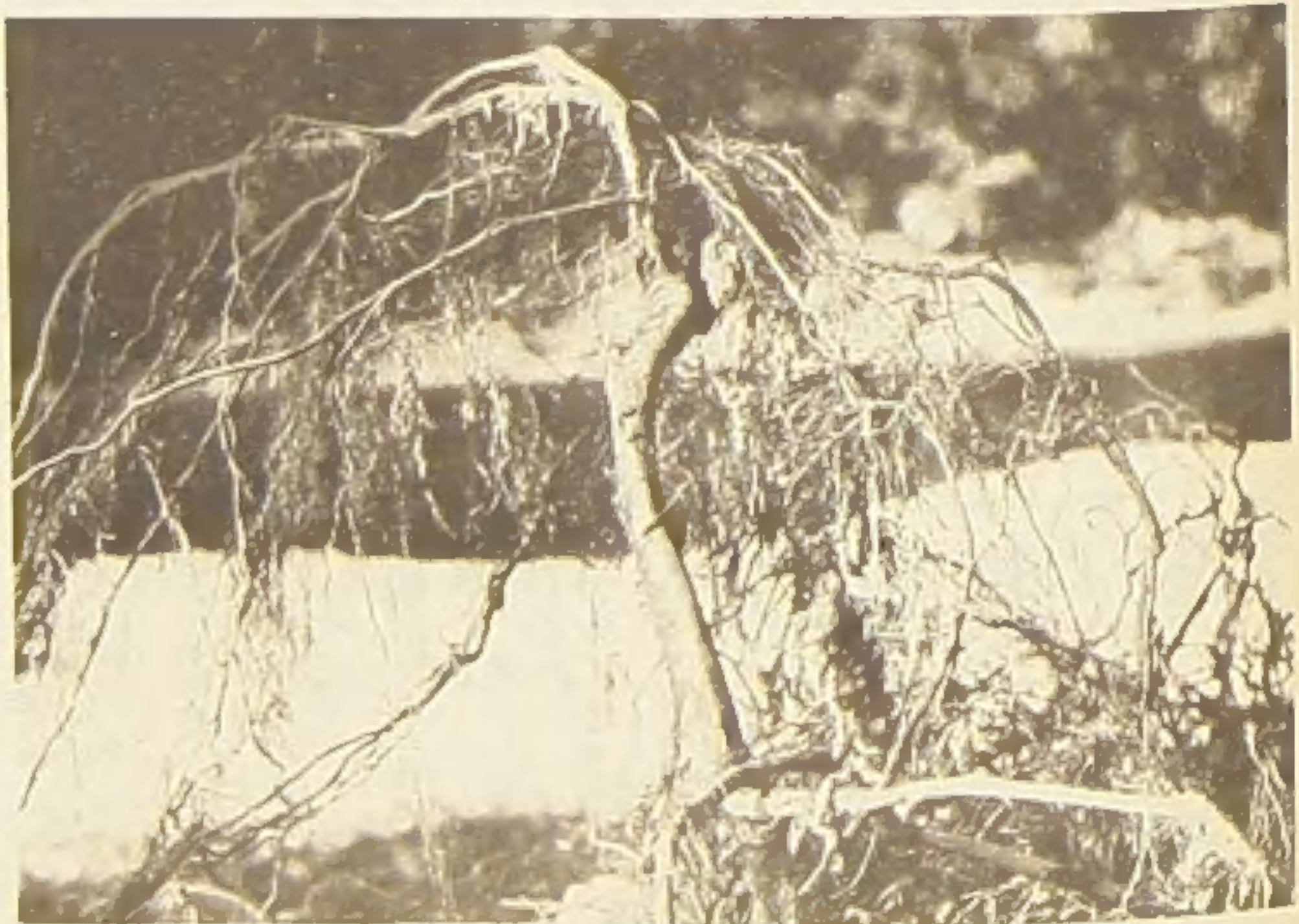
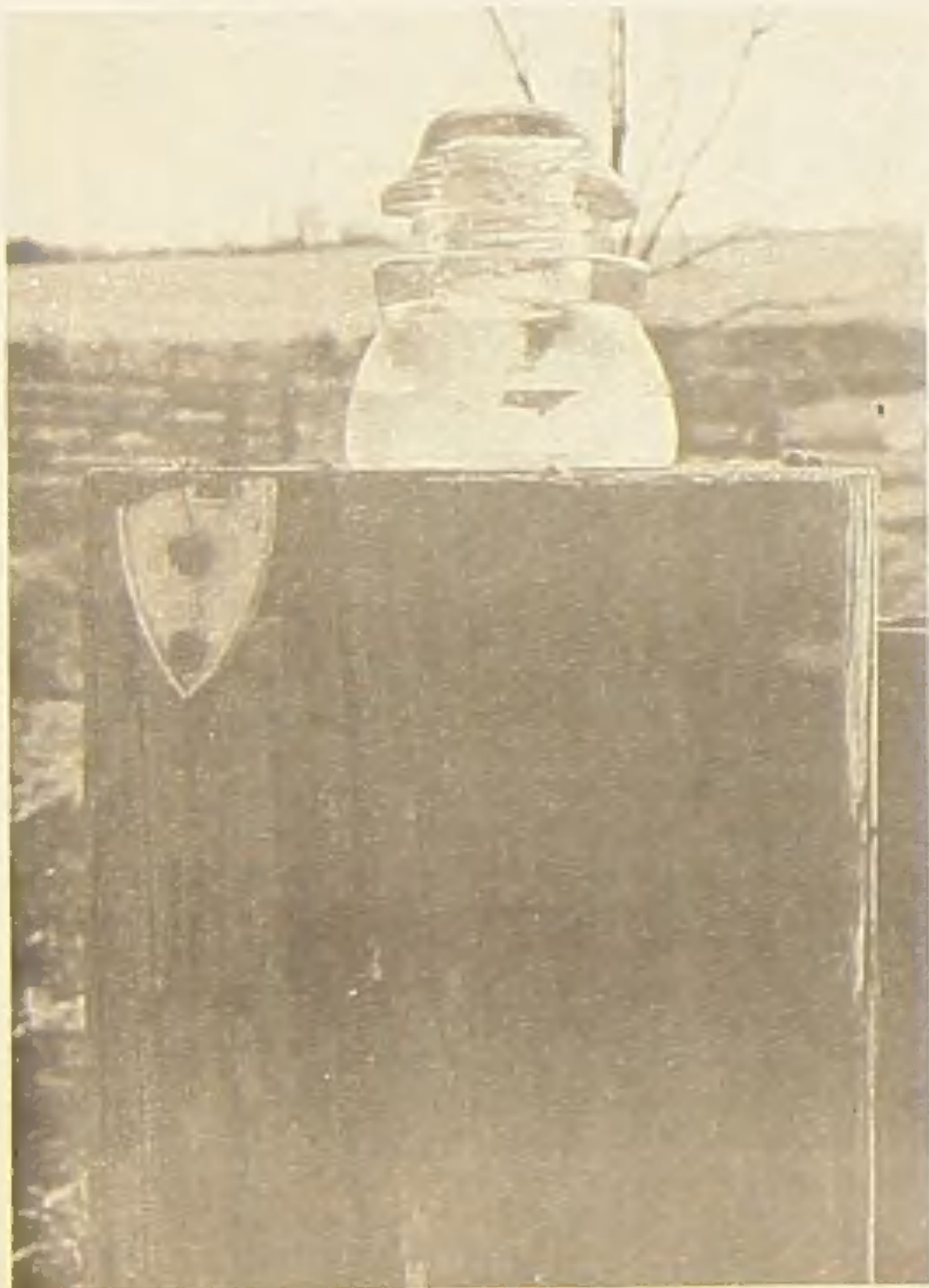
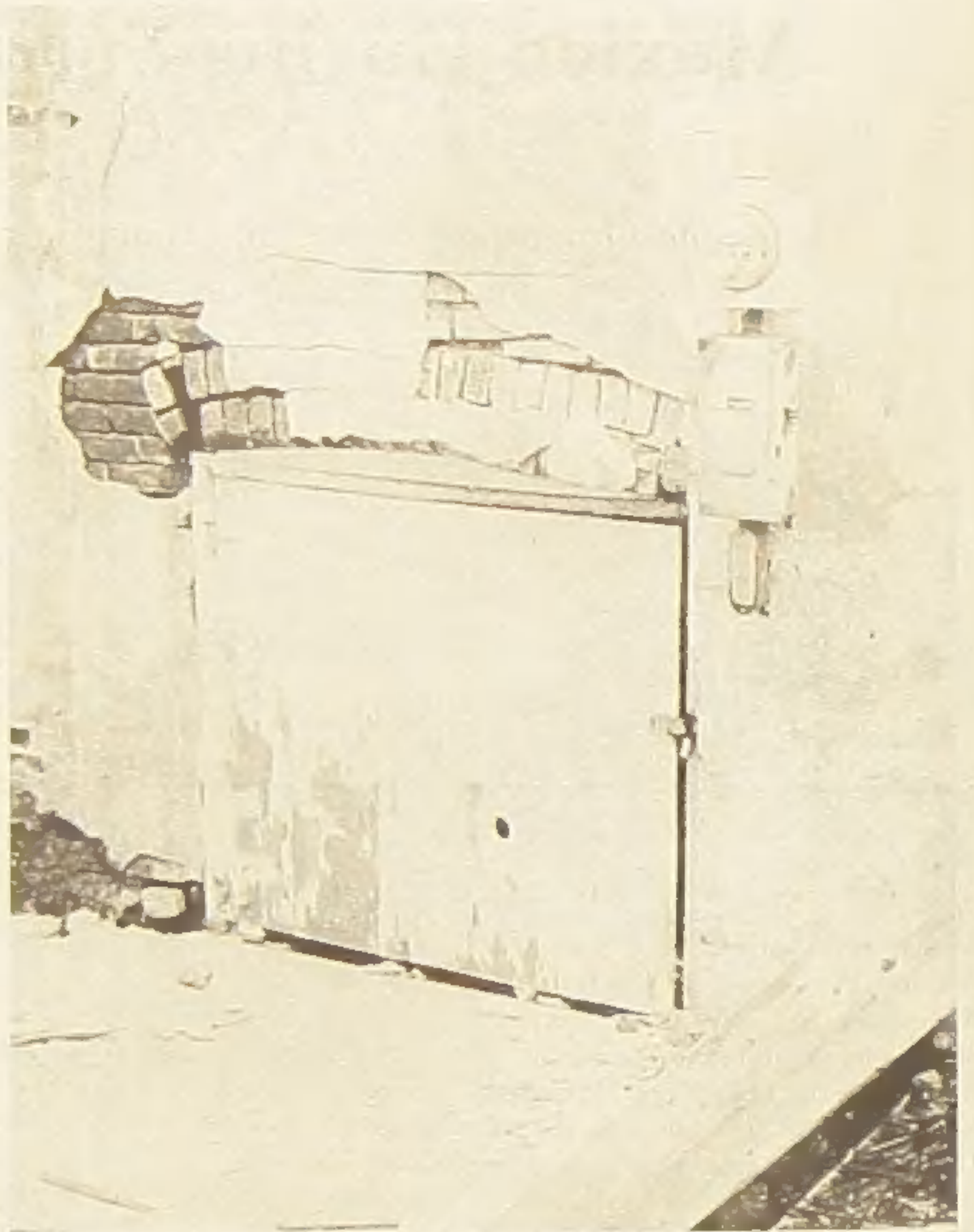
A small town outside Mexico City
Within which stood an old church, cheek by jowl
With shops and houses. The steepish
Roads coming and going to the surrounding
Places and, the church in this most Holy Week
Nestled amongst the bustle of the town where,
Outside the cars were passing and, the orange juice stall
Close by waited to quench the thirst of the visitors;
While within, the souls of the faithful received
Refreshment from the cool interior.
Heightened emotions were felt as the people
Came to pay their respects to Him, who by His
Love for them had permitted Suffering and Death
To claim Him for three days; that His people
Might thereby be saved. This remembrance
Of time so long ago has hastened their footsteps
Forth to do Him homage. People of all ages came
Or were brought. The peaceful feeling of the
Church was, as I walked back towards the
West door, shattered, as I beheld the world of
Poverty and need which had entered therein.
I looked, and saw in one of the small chapels
Off the nave, an old woman in black, kneeling
At the altar, and by her side
A young girl of about six in an old green
Sweater, with different colored skirt. So
Poor they looked amid the ornate chapel,
Yet, so devout as they, both kneeling

There, obviously concerned, not with their
Outward appearance but how they
Inwardly appeared to God. I stopped
And looked awhile. Endeavoring not to intrude
On their devotions but caught up in a moment
Of sadness and pity; for this was Holy Saturday
And, on the morrow the bells would ring out their
Triumphant song—"He is Risen." But of now, the
Young girl in the old green sweater, knelt before
The altar. How I longed to have had money
That I could have requested she accept and
Buy a white dress for her Easter Day's apparel.
Alas, I had insufficient to offer, it would
Not have helped so, I passed by on my way
Out of the Church and into the vestibule—if
Such could be called—it was but the width
Of a church door wide and there, oblivious
To all knelt an old man in front of a
Statue of the Crucified Christ, his eyes
Cast no higher than Christ's Feet, and in his
Face a look of adoration and imploration.
For what, I know not, but the sincerity
Was plain to see. It was his Lord, and
He in supplication and reverence knelt on.
While I, my step and heart now lighter
Passed through the portals of the Church
And joined my company.

Bertha Wootten-Case

Gallery Gallery Gallery:

Rick Evans





Pat Halverson

Tender Feelings

A tender feeling
like an open wound,
Gets infected so easily.
Bitterness, anger, and resentment
are all a part of the infestation.
This feeling is so hard to fight off,
Not knowing exactly what stirs it.

Melody Cundiff

Touble Take

We all like watching people
with no intent in mind
to scan them as they approach us
...and sometimes from behind.

Curtis Steere

The Beaver

paddle tail
smacking the surface
of the confined pond
damning the vulnerable borders
of the once flowing stream

slapping
like a schoolmaster
on the river's palm
beating into submission
the frolicking child

Sharon Stone



Rick Evans

Clearing Paths

Looking through another's eyes
 trying to find tomorrow
 Grinning through another's smile
 in hopes of hiding sorrow
 Traveling down another's path
 you learn to clear your own
 So that when another's not about
 you can make it all alone.

Curtis Steere

Could It Be Said

Could it be said that each shining star
 Is a soul bound for heaven—
 A spirit rejoicing above,
 Appearing brighter than any other.

While below the mortals weep,
 Trying to conceive these events,
 Recalling those nights of trickling waters,
 And chasing the moon.

Melody Cundiff



Rick Evans

The Mole

blindly digging
 beneath the surface
 the mound of earth
 moving across the stretch
 of smooth marless green
 puffing up
 over the mining mole

 innocently
 scarring the combed lawn
 crisscrossing
 through the blades of green
 tracking aimlessly
 like the newly blind
 unskilled in his wanderings

Susan Stone

Buffalo

two bulls
standing their ground
preparing to meet their foe
mammoth heads lowered
their steaming nostrils
blowing up dust covered ground

thrusting their mountainous shoulders forward
pounding the wooly heads
like slugging fists
shuddering massive bodies
with every blow

the earthquake hooves
kicking up the cloud
of sweltering choking dust
swallowing the battling opponents
like an eager crowd
surrounding boxers in a ring

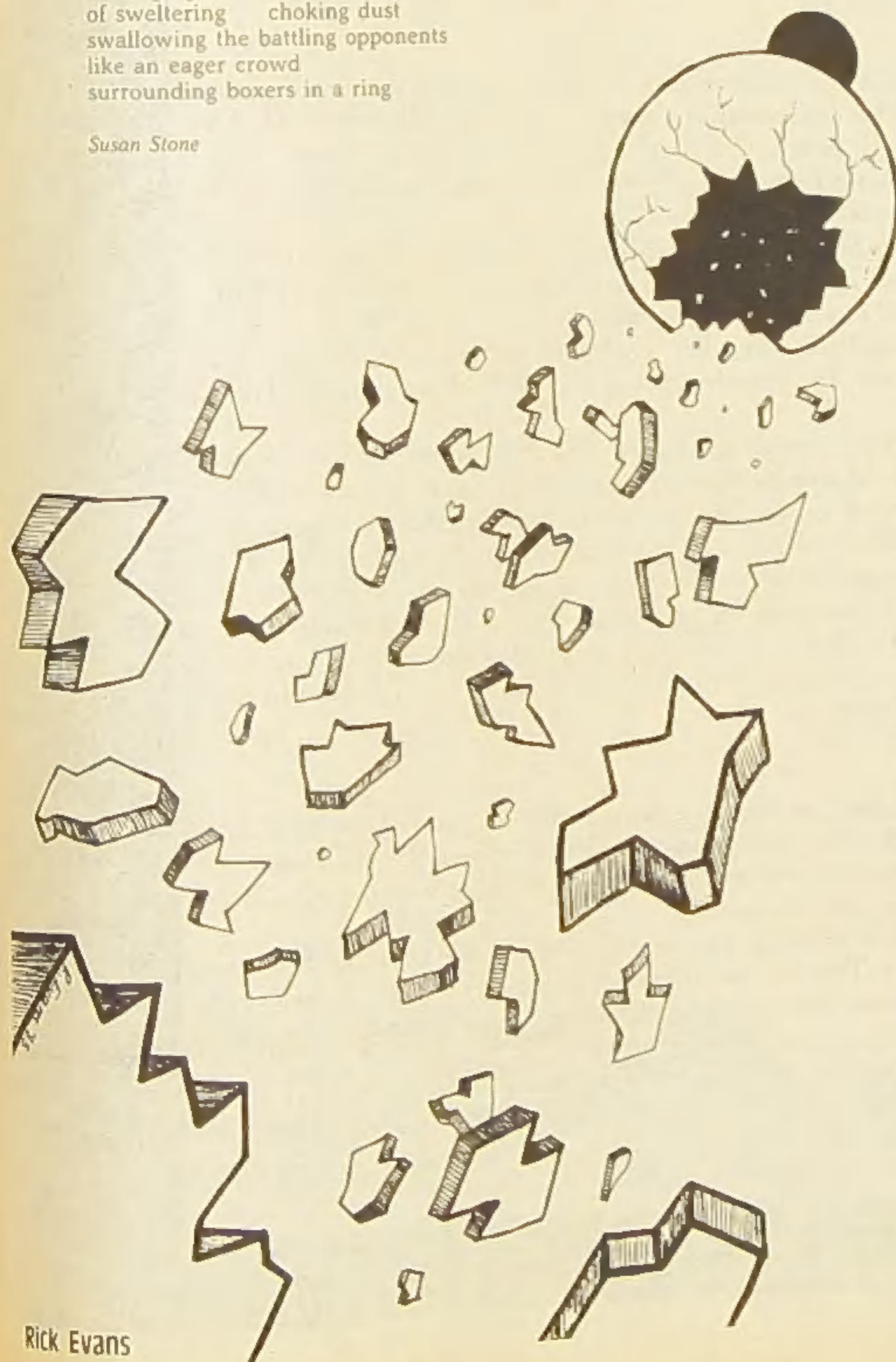
Susan Stone

Relax

If you act the way
you think you should feel
sincerity you thwart.
When you look inside
at what is real
you need never hide
what you feel at heart

Relax and
do just what you please
disregard conformity
set your mind at ease.

Curtis Steere



Rick Evans

Mother Nature's Wrath

California's sinking, folks,
and Maui's blowing up.
Africa's blowing away,
Antartica's moving up.


The A-Bomb isn't what we fear,
It's Mother Nature's Wrath.
Polution, overpopulation:
Neglect is in our path.

The sun is getting hotter,
will explode in a billion years,
but poor old Earth will not survive
to see its own worst fear.

The forty minute war won't come,
the bombs will not explode;
The Bear and Uncle Sam won't fight
They'll just wait to erode.

Bureacracy and government
aren't destroying Earth
It's you and me and trash and waste
That's destroying Earth.
So think of this when demonstrating
on a new warhead:
The missile will never leave its gate
with trash upon its head.

Jon Jonz



The Lord is My Shepherd

By Tom Bartkowiak

The night was dark as a light mist swirled in the wind. Ann was walking on the edge of the road as she made her way home from a friend's house. She could see the headlights of a car as it approached. Ann said to herself, "He'll see me and go around."

At approximately 7:30 the next morning, Ann was found along the side of the road. She had died alone, sometime in the darkness.

Ann and I were friends for as long as I can remember. We always talked and dreamed about our lives "tomorrow." She was the first person to illustrate to me that life is not forever.

My cousin Keith lived in a rural town near Bakersfield, California. When he was 10 years old, he and his friend were riding their bicycles. Keith darted out into the road and right into the path of a car. The driver had no time to react. Keith was pronounced dead on arrival.

Parents are hurt the most when an accident like this occurs because they have devoted their lives to the child. So what can be done to protect children from fatal accidents? There really isn't too much a parent can do. The children can not be locked in the house forever.

There is always an element of risk in life. Probably the best thing for a parent to do is to make the child aware that these accidents do happen, and these children that die are real. Make the child understand that he is not exempt from the dangers of the world. Tell him what some of the dangers are, and then just pray that your child will take some precautions. This does not guarantee safety, but with the help of God it might assist your child to make a safe decision.

One day in mid-August, two boys were sitting on the railroad tracks in the middle of a bridge. Five o'clock in the morning was an odd time for Sean, 15, and David, 14, to be out talking and dreaming about what their lives will be like tomorrow. As odd as it is, these boys did this quite frequently.

They heard the five o'clock train approaching and got up to get off the bridge. Somehow David's foot got caught. They tried everything but nothing worked; his foot would not come loose! Sean ran for the end of the bridge. David never had a chance to escape. Sean almost made it off the end of the bridge to safety.

The boys never had any trouble on the bridge before that morning. Just as in many accidents, every precaution can be taken to avoid injury or death. However, like the old cliché that is now written on the bridge where Sean and David were killed, "The Lord is my shepherd. There is nothing I shall want."